strike in the month of April this year demanding proper investigation into the alleged murder of their colleague Shri K.M. Babu whose partially burnt body was recovered from the Connaught Place Telephone Exchange building on April, 17; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and what action was taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Some of the staff members staged lunch-hour demonstrations at Khurshid Lal Bhavan demanding proper investigation into the alleged murder of their colleague Shri K.M. Babu.

(b) The matter is under investigation by Delhi Police.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

MTNL records destroyed in Chander Lok Fire

1. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Indian Express dated 23rd June, 1997 under the heading Records implicating MTNL top brass burnt in Chander Lok fire.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of cases pertaining to tender scam in MTNL which has been under probe of the CBI alongwith the names of officials involved therein, which have since been destroyed on account of fire; and

(d) the action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The documents pertaining the case referred to in the Press Clipping of Indian Express dated the 23rd June, 1997 were taken into custody by the CBI officials on 5th June, 1997 pertaining to the offices of Superintending Engineer (C-C) and Executive Engineer (C-V) before the occurence of fire on 17th June, 1997 (F/N). Some more documents were taken by the CBI on 17th June, 1997 (A/N) from the office of Executive Engineer (C-I), MTNL, New Delhi whose office is located in the TE building/ CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi.

(c) There is only one case registered by CBI. The MTNL officials against whom CBI is conducting the enquiry given in Para (b) are Shri Kul Bhushan, Superintending Engineer, Shri H.R. Kaushik, the then Executive Engineer (EE) and Shri R.C. Arora, Executive Engineer, HQ.

(d) This decision for further course of action will be taken, on receipt of report of the CBI and in consultation with the CBI.

Internet facilities at the affordable cost

2. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the steps taken by Government to provide Internet facilities at the affordable cost in view of its popularity and usefulness;

(b) whether VSNL will be able to cater the increasing demand for Internet connection;

(c) whether Government are aware that the users of Internet has lot of complaint that they are not able to

connect Internet; and

(d) whether any other agencies are permitted to provide Internet connectivity?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) VSNL has established international Internet Gateways Department of Telecommunications has also set up many Internet nodes in the country in the last one year. The tariff for the same is affordable.

Increasing demand is met by expansion of existing nodes & Installation of additional dometic nodes and increasing the capacity of international gateways as and when necessary.

(c) Yes sir, in some cases due to congestion.

(d) NICNET, ERNET & Software Technology Parks of DOE are permitted to provide Internet Access to their permitted Network Users.

Introduction of tapping system by security forces

3. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDHE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether various security forces, including CBI and RAW proposed to introduce a tapping system with respect to cellular phones;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard; and

(c) how far it is legally and aesthetically maintainable and justifiable?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) As per provisions contained in Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, subject to conditions/situation laid down, the Central Government or a State Government or any officer specially authorised in this behalf by the Central Government or a State Government may intercept or detain a message or a class of messages. While R&AW is not concerned with the subject, in the case of CBI, the operational requirement necessitates collecting of intelligence on crime including through tapping of phones/ cellular phones, after following the due procedure established by law.

(b) All the licenses of Cellular Mobile Telephone services are governed by the provision mentioned at (a) above.

(c) As long as the interception/tapping of cellular phones is under taken or ordered under the specified provisions contained in Section 5(2) of the said Act viz on the occurrence of any public emergency, or in the interest of the public safety, it would be legal, maintainable and justifiable.

गुजरात के जनजातीय और सीमावर्ती क्षेत्रों में टेलीफोन सुविधा

4. **श्री अनन्तराय देवशंकर दवे:** क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार को इस बात की जानकारी है कि गुजरात के जनजातीय और सीमावर्ती क्षेत्रों विशेषकर कच्छ जिले में टेलीफोन सुविधानों का अभाव है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं और इस संबंध में सुधार हेतु क्या कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं;

(ग) क्या सरकार सभी तहसील मुख्यालयों को टेलीफोन सुविधाओं से जोड़ने का विचार रखती है;

(घ) क्या परिमंडल के मुख्य महाप्रबंधक ने इस संबंध में कोई विशेष कदम उठाए हैं; और

(ङ) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है और यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

संचार मंत्री (श्री बेनी प्रसाद वर्मा): (क) और (ख) कच्छ जिला सहित गुजरात के जनजातीय तथा